

**The Claims Defining the Invention are as follows:**

1. A method for assisting a professional person to advise a client, comprising the steps of:

5                   presenting a plurality of questions to the client regarding a subject and receiving answers in response to the questions from the client;

                  analysing the answers from the client in a computer system according to predefined indicators for each question;

                  producing from the analysis an indication of the relevance of the subject to the client; and

10                  providing to the professional person the answers provided by the client and the indication of the relevance of the subject to the client.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of presenting at least one further question to the client in response to at least one answer provided by the client.

15                  3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of presenting to the client, for some of the questions, a set of predefined answers from which the client selects one.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the set of predefined answers is presented as a sliding scale.

20                  5. A method according to claim 3, wherein the set of predefined answers is presented as a set of discrete answers.

6. A method according to any of claims 3, wherein the predefined list has a corresponding predefined indicator in the computer system.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the step of analysing the answers comprises summing the predefined indicators for the answers to each question.
- 5 8. A method according to claims 6, wherein the step of analysing the answers comprises summing the predefined indicators for the answers to some of the questions, the questions for which the answers are summed being selected according to a predefined relationship.
- 10 9. A method according to claim 7, wherein the step of producing an indication of the relevance of the subject comprises comparing the sum of the predefined indicators with a predefined list of ranges, with each range having a corresponding relevance indicator, and selecting the relevant indicator corresponding to a range that includes the sum of the predefined indicators for the answers.
- 15 10.A method according to claim 8, wherein the step of producing an indication of the relevance of the subject comprises comparing the sum of the predefined indicators with a predefined list of ranges, with each range having a corresponding relevance indicator, and selecting the relevant indicator corresponding to a range that includes the sum of the predefined indicators for the answers.
- 20 11.A method according to claim 10, wherein the questions are adapted in response to the question being previously presented to the client.
- 12.A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein tests are compared to provide an indication of progress of the client.
- 25 13.A method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of storing records of consultations between the professional person and the client, each record including requests for questions on subjects from the professional person, wherein the method comprises subsequently presenting the client with a plurality of questions regarding the subjects requested by the professional person.

14. A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of presenting the client with a plurality of questions and receiving answers therefrom is performed over a data network.
- 5 15. A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing the answers and the indication of the relevance to the professional person is performed over a data network.
16. An apparatus for assisting a professional person to advise a client, comprising:
- 10 a database storing a plurality of questions grouped by subject, and predefined indicators associated with each question;
- means for presenting to the client a plurality of questions regarding a subject and for receiving answers regarding those questions from the client;
- 15 analysis means responsive to the answers from the client and to the predefined indicators for the corresponding questions to produce an indication of the relevance of the subject to the client;
- means for presenting the answers and the indication of the relevance to the professional person.
17. An apparatus according to claim 14, further including means for presenting the answers and the indication of the relevance to the client.
- 20 18. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the means for presenting to the client a plurality of questions is arranged to present at least one further question to the client in response to at least one answer provided by the client.
- 25 19. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the database includes a set of predefined answers associated with each question, said means for presenting to the client a plurality of questions being arranged to present

to the client, with each question, a set of predefined answers from which the client selects one.

20. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the set of predefined answers is presented as a sliding scale.

5 21. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the set of predefined answers is presented as a set of discrete answers.

22. An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein each answer in the predefined set has a corresponding predefined indicator in database.

10 23. An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the analysis means is arranged to sum the predefined indicators for the answers to each question.

15 24. An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the analysis means is arranged to sum the predefined indicators for the answers to some of the questions, the questions for which the answers are summed being selected according to a predefined relationship.

20 25. An apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the analysis means is arranged to produce the indication of the relevance of the subject by comparing the sum of the predefined indicators with a predefined list of ranges stored in the database, with each range having a corresponding relevance indicator, and to select the relevant indicator corresponding to a range that includes the sum of the predefined indicators for the answers.

25 26. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the analysis means is arranged to produce the indication of the relevance of the subject by comparing the sum of the predefined indicators with a predefined list of ranges stored in the database, with each range having a corresponding relevance indicator, and to select the relevant indicator corresponding to a range that includes the sum of the predefined indicators for the answers.

5 27. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the database includes data records of consultations between the professional person and the client, each data record including requests from the professional person for questions on subjects, wherein the means for presenting to the client a plurality of questions is arranged to subsequently present the client with a plurality of questions regarding the subjects requested by the professional person.

10 28. An apparatus according to claim 26, further including means for adapting the questions in response to the question being previously presented to the client.

29. An apparatus according to claim 26, further including means for comparing tests to provide an indication of progress of the client.

15 30. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the means for presenting to the client a plurality of questions is arranged to present the questions to the client via a data network.

31. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the means for presenting the answers and the indication of the relevance to the professional person is arranged to present the answers and the indication to the professional person via a data network.

20 32. A method for assisting a medical practitioner to advise a patient, comprising the steps of:

presenting a plurality of questions to the patient regarding the patient's condition and receiving answers in response to the questions from the patient;

25 analysing the answers from the patient in a computer system according to predefined indicators for each question;

producing from the analysis an indication of the relevance of the subject to the patient; and

providing to the medical practitioner the answers provided by the patient  
and the indication of the existence of one or more conditions in the patient.

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